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Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1981BUENOS06236

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 ARA-10 SY-02 OCS-06
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P 251647Z AUG 81
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0725

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

☒ In Part ☒ In Full ~~DECLASSIFIED~~

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 6236

EO 12065: N/A
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJECT: CODEL LEHMAN'S VISIT TO DEBORA BENCHOAM

DECONTROL

1. CONGRESSMAN LEHMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS AIDE SERGIO BENDIXEN, VISIT DEBORA BENCHOAM AT VILLA DEVOTO PRISON AUGUST 24. THE CONGRESSMAN OBTAINED PERMISSION TO VISIT BENCHOM AFTER HE MADE A PERSONAL REQUEST TO DO SO OF INTERIOR MINISTER LIENDO.

2. THE CONGRESSMAN FOUND BENCHOAM IN GOOD SPIRITS AND HEALTH WITH NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH SHE IS HELD. HOWEVER, SHE IS VERY ANXIOUS TO BE RELEASED.

3. COMMENT: WHILE THE CONGRESSMAN WAS WITH BENCHOAM, EMBOFF WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM TO PRISON TALKED TO PRISON AUTHORITIES ABOUT HER CASE. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION TO EMERGE FROM THIS CONVERSATION WAS THAT WHILE IN HER FIRST THREE YEARS IN JAIL BENCHOAM RECEIVED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS ON 26 OCCASIONS, SHE HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED WITH ANY DISCIPLINARY INFRACTIONS FOR OVER A YEAR. THIS RECORD CAUSED HER TO BE MOVED SOME TIME AGO FROM THE CATEGORY OF "INCORRIGIBLES" TO "AVERAGE". NEW PRISON DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

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WHICH MAKES SUCH CATEGORIZATIONS IS SCHEDULED TO MEET BEGINNING AUGUST 25. THE AUTHORITIES WERE CONFIDENT THAT ON THE BASIS OF BENCHOAM'S GOOD

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BEHAVIOR OVER THE PAST YEAR, SHE WOULD BE MOVED INTO THE TOP CATEGORY OF THOSE WHOSE BEHAVIOR IS CONSIDERED "GOOD." THOSE IN THIS CATEGORY GET MORE PRIVILEGES IN PRISON. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, PRISON CONDUCT IS A VERY IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE GOA'S DECISION ON WHETHER TO RELEASE A PRISONER. HERETOFORE, WE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT BENCHOAM'S PAST CONDUCT IN JAIL MADE HER RELEASE VERY UNLIKELY. IF SHE IS INDEED RECLASSIFIED INTO THE TOP CATEGORY, HER CHANCES OF RELEASE ARE PROBABLY MUCH IMPROVED.

SHLAUDEMAN

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